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A Dissertation
on
Hepatitis
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of Virginia

Candidate for the Degree of M. D.
In the University of Pennsylvania.

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Of Hepatitis or Inflammation of the liver.

Hepatitis is divided by systematic writers into acute and chronic, the latter variety of the disease I have chosen for the subject of my dissertation.

By chronic Hepatitis I understand a slow inflammatory affection of the substance of the liver or its enclosing membranes or both. It is frequently the result of acute hepatitis improperly treated or suffered to advance too far in its inflammatory progress before the salutary aid of medicine and other means for overcoming the violence of the disease are duly exercised; unfortunate indeed the proper time for medical assistance is often neglected until the constitution is entirely destroyed by the undermining influence of the malady.

The present form of this complaint is slow in its progressive stages, the organ attacked may be suffering for months and even years under the ravages of its deleterious effects and yet present no very obvious external marks of disease, or aggravation of symptoms by which our attention is directed to the insidious approach of danger; any transient feelings of indisposi-

tion are generally imputed by the patient to some improper or ungrounded cause, not for a moment suspecting the liver as being the source from whence all those peculiar sensations are derived. Thus deluded by his fallacious imagination the necessary precautions are neglected and the disease so firmly entrenched as to frequently baffle the skill of our profession.

So generic indeed are liver complaints and so deceptive in their appearance, that I am persuaded this organ is frequently involved unnoticed by either practitioner or patient, and in consequence of the variety of symptoms presented and its disposition to assume the form of so many different diseases, it is often ~~mistaken~~ for some one to which it has no relation.

The most effectual method of guarding against such mistakes, is an attention strictly directed to the symptoms generally presented, particularly the alvine excretions, which if properly attended to will in a majority of cases give a correct decision.

The Symptoms are generally slightly felt by the patient, and often after a continuance for sometime

are more prominently disclosed by a disagreable sense of fulness after eating, accompanied by an oppression or soreness in the epigastric region, followed by a disposition to drowsiness. The skin becomes dry, with much accumulation of heat; the complexion is sallow; stools light denoting a deficiency of bile accompanied with much flatulence. Urine high coloured deficient in quantity, often depositing a pink or mucous sediment: at other times it is more copious and liquid in its consistence. The patient feels a considerable langour and vacuity at the pit of the stomach; succeeded by a disposition to sleep, which is seldom of a refreshing nature, interrupted by distressing dreams leaving an alarm when he awakes, which no visible circumstance seems to justify. Pain is occasionally felt which is acute or obtuse and heavy, it is most usually in the right side & consequently the patient lies most comfortably on it. The pulse varies much in its frequency sometimes hard and chordide at others small and frequent with frequent intermissions, which is ascribed to a redundancy of bile in the hepatic duct, an obstruction of blood in the hepatic artery

or by an accumulation of it in the venae por. or produced by an enlargement of the substance of the organs.

Dejection of spirits is a general concomitant of the patient at this stage of the disease, so much so that the most frivolous circumstances are swelled to the most momentous dangers, and trifles light as the air he breathes are transfigured into masters of the most hideous character. The bowels never perform their office by throwing off a quantity proportionate to the quantity of aliment taken in. The appetite is variable sometimes diminished, at others increased in a preternatural degree. The thirst is generally natural, tongue furred most commonly at the base with a white or yellowish coat. In many cases there is a pain in the right side extending to the right shoulder and down the vertebral column where a gnawing or aching sensation is experienced, with a fulness in the side and vacuity at the pit of the stomach which produces great uneasiness and restlessness. The extremities are edematous with a want of motion in the joints showing a viscidity of the lubricating fluids which renders them unfit

[illegible] their complications and [illegible] of the facility [illegible] ion required. After the patient has for a length of time been suffering under the afflicting power of this disease, a general commotion is one of its most prominent characteristics. Finally the disease is not unfrequently [illegible] by [illegible] such as an enlargement of the liver and "derangement of its functions: terminating in a hollow dry cough without expectoration in asthma, Hydrocephalus, Hydrothorax, &c.

These symptoms notwithstanding the intimacy of the [illegible] are often so insidious in their attack as to pass almost entirely unnoticed by either physician or patient, while examinations after death have plainly shown the liver to be highly diseased, which in the patients lifetime produced but little inconvenience, and which must have doubtless been the result of previous inflammation.

From the striking resemblance of these symptoms to those involving the lungs, and to other inflammatory affections of the chest, they are eminently calculated,

to mislead the in[illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] of the confluent.
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] an experienced practitioner;
if we have no [illegible] to direct us in extremely [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] tendernes, obstruction and enlargement
of the liver. The aids an experienced teacher has in
[illegible] [illegible] of examination to satisfy oneself
relative to the difference between a healthy & diseased
state of the Organ.

To facilitate an examination
it should be observed that when the diaphragm
descends the liver is carried downwards, and when it is
carried in a contrary direction it is covered by the
margin of the ribs or chest. When you should place
the patient on his back with his head drawn forwards,
one knee [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] body, in order to relax
his abdominal muscles, then [illegible] [illegible] make a deep
inspiration, at this time the examination should be made
following the margin of the ribs with the fingers.
The liver is sometimes found enlarged sometimes diminished

at other enlarged without any alteration of structure, which happens in recent congestion.

Causes. The causes of chronic Hepatitis are long exposure to Heat or Cold; marsh miasma; the Intermittent or remittent fevers; Drunkenness; It is says Professor Chapman frequently brought on by extravagant use of mercury, in autumnal fevers and other disorders producing a great excitement of the liver; and it is a law of the animal economy that a correspondent collapse will follow a preternatural excitement hence in obedience to that law, when the liver is immediately excited by mercury that a correspondent collapse must necessarily follow; which produces a feeble circulation through the vena portarum, giving rise to congestion, enlargement and induration of the organ.

The degrees to which the liver may arrive in point of disease are varied from congestion to induration & even destruction; besides being filled with cheesy, osseous, or tallowy matter. An eminent writer relates the case of a gentleman in Bengal whose liver presented the appearance of a coagulated preparation leaving

may the disease. Johnson speaks of many remarkable cases which came under his observation one was so much enlarged as to reach the pubes.

Indeed so intimately connected are all the abdominal viscera, that their motions entirely depend on each other, and also unite the performance of the functions peculiar to each, in such intimate connexion, that the disturbance of one necessarily produces a correspondent alteration in the others.

This is strikingly exemplified in the case which receives its blood from the Stomach, Intestines, Pancreas & Spleen. Hence any abdominal organ being diseased materially effects the condition of the liver, and their derangement may be a cause of Hepatic disease. Thus situated it is of importance to know whether any existing disease of the liver is a primary or secondary affection, arising from some distant abdominal organ. This is accomplished by a strict attention to the variety of complicated bilious complaints, which calls for careful discrimination on the part of the practitioner.

A sudden repulsion of blood from the surface to the internal organs, necessarily increases congestion by over distending the vessels in their debilitated and morbid conditions; at a period too, when they do not possess energy sufficient for the restoration of their healthy action.

Chronic Hepatitis is slow in its progress and deceptive in its appearances creeping on with undermining rapidity without the patient being aware of its existence, or occasionally without any characteristic to induce even the physician to think the ailments of the individual arise from this source. Hence every practitioner will consider such a disease of primary importance, and perceive the necessity of assiduously enquiring into its nature, in order that it may be known when it exists, and the means to eradicate it be conducted with discrimination and propriety. Nature in all cases if not frustrated by rashness and interference, will do much to counteract diseased impressions, and should be assisted with gentleness in her exertions.

In hepatic complaints generally, a first thing to be attended to, is the state of the digestion, a knowledge of which is acquired by an attentive examination of the secretions that pass by the stomach and intestines, to which every medical man should familiarize himself, as it requires time and observation to make him seem acquainted with the varieties presented in biliary secretions. Then there is an unusual accumulation of the urine in the urinary bladder, of retention, and necessarily pressure on the large blood vessels of the abdomen, obstructing the circulation in the extremities, and causing a bluish with a sense of suffocation, not relieved by the effects of opium. This is [illegible] by the [illegible] of the [illegible] in the veins of the hands and [illegible] of the feet.

In conducting the treatment of this morbid condition of the organ, our remedies should be accommodated to the progress of the complaint. Hepatitis in this country is divided into 2 stages. First, that of a simple derangement of the functions of the gland. Second

an unusual change in the organization of the organ.
treatment. The first object is to produce free action
in the stomach and intestines, by which the liver from
its intimate connexion will be materially influenced,
bringing due regard to the restoration of balance
which equally influences the surface and general
circulation, for the accomplishment of which it
is necessary to bleed, at least bleed from the arm by venesection
and repeated bleedings, or cupping, leeching, in the
vicinity of the diseased part. Care should be
had to properly emulging the biliary vessels and procuring
regular alvine evacuations, which is more readily
effected by Calomel than other medicines.
The leontodon taraxacum or Dandelion is spoken of
as having been used with success in this complaint
given in the dose of a table spoonful of the expressed
juice when green. But Professor Blackman's remedy
more worthy of confidence a course of Mercury which
should never be extended to a profuse salivation
as has been injudiciously recommended by some
writers on the subject. To obtain the best possible effects
recommend

of mercury, calomel or what is still more the blue pill should be given in small quantities until the mouth is made tender and slightly affected with the mercurial [illegible]. This impression should be continued for some weeks as circumstances may demand. With the view of producing a transfer of excitement from the diseased part as well as [illegible] upon the [illegible] system, emetics, blisters, setons, and issues, are requisite in the [illegible]: the former particularly when the [illegible] with great [illegible] and the mode [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the tartar [illegible] rubbing [illegible] inasmuch as it produces a more [illegible] determination to the surface. [illegible] Muriatic [illegible] [illegible] of this remedy is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] autumnal [illegible] [illegible] for [illegible] until the inflammatory action is [illegible].

To [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], in combination with the strictest attention [illegible] on the part of the patient, [illegible] [illegible]

our remedies ineffectual in arresting the progress of this formidable malady. After having recourse to all the remedies in our power, it is advised by an eminent member of our faculty for the patient to visit some of our sulphur watering places which act not only by the effects of the water on the system, but also by dispeling those gloomy reflections and apprehensions, with which the patient is so universally beset in this disease. The springs best suited for such diseases are those of Virginia & Pennsylvania. This should be tried so long as there is no inflammatory action existing in the system. In such cases they uniformly prove injurious, to this should be added a strict attention to diet. That best adapted to patients afflicted with this disease is such as is attenuant, nutritive, and easy of digestion, avoiding salted meats and greasy substances. This diet may be gradually improved by the addition of light animal broths, poultry, mutton or veal, so dressed as to retain their nutritious juices, ripe fruits

in moderate quantity. Vegetables of a crude cold nature which are liable to acidify on the stomach should be carefully avoided if wine is indulged in it should be diluted with water. Malt liquors seldom agree with the patient and for the most part should be laid aside, Spirituous liquors should be avoided as productive of the most deleterious consequences. A strict attention to the above precautions is of primary importance and if duly attended to by the patient will often reward him for his abstinence and crown him with a return of health.